

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 SAL-01 OMB-01 STR-08 INT-08

RSR-01 /183 W

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R 111455 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7893

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 3975

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ENRG EMIN UR

SUBJ: YAKUTIA: GOLD FUELS

1. EMBOFFS TRAVELLING IN YAKUTSKAYA ASSR APRIL 5-8 WERE TOLD SEVERAL THINGS OF POTENTIAL INTEREST TO WASHINGTON AGENCIES. PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF INFORMATION WAS POSSIBLE- PLANTED GEOLOGIST ENGAGED IN GOLD EXPLORATION.

2. GOLD. WHILE CONSIDERABLE GOLD RESERVES STILL EXIST IN YAKUTIA (AND EXPLORATION THERE CONTINUES), PRODUCTION IS DECREASING, WITH GREATEST EXTRACTION NOW TAKING PLACE IN MAGADANSKAY OBLAST' AND KYZL- KUM DESERT. IN GENERAL, MOST GOLD IN NORTHEAST SIBERIA IS STILL EXTRACTED VIA " OPEN PIT" METHOD, I. E., BULLDOZING IN DEPTH OF 12-15 METERS ALONG BEDS OF SMALL RIVERS. STATE ALLOWS " PRIVATE ENTERPRISE" IN GOLD EXTRACTION. THIS CONSISTS OF BRIGADES OF 30-40 MEN WHO ARE PAID SOME TOTAL AS WHOLE STATE ENTERPRISES TO EXTRACT GIVEN QUANTITY OF GOLD AND DO SO MUCH MORE QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY. WHEN ASKED ABOUT TOTAL AMOUNT OF GOLD CURRENTLY BEING PRODUCED, SOURCE REFUSED COMMENT, SAYING: " WE FULFILLED OUR
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PLAN."

3. COAL. IN ADDITION TO LOW- GRADE COAL DEPOSITS, YAKUTIA (ESPECIALLY SOUTHERN PART) HAS HUGE QUANTITIES OF EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH- QUALITY COAL SUITABLE FOR STEEL MILL USE. JAPAN PLANNING TO INVEST GREAT SUMS TO ASSIST SOVIETS IN EXPLOITING IT AND WILL RECEIVE PAYMENT IN KIND. FOR TRANSPORTING OUT THIS COAL SOVIETS ARE NOW BUILDING RAILROAD LINK FROM SOUTHERN YAKUTIA TO UNNAMED DESTINATION (PRESUMABLY TO TIE IN WITH TRANS- SIBERIAN LINE IN EASTERN SIBERIA) WITH HELP OF 30,000 NORTH KOREAN CONTRACT WORKERS. IN RETURN, NORTH KOREA WILL ALSO RECEIVE COAL FOR ITS STEEL MILLS.

4. GAS. EARLIER THOUGHTS ABOUT HUGE GAS RESERVES IN YAKUTIA HAVE BEEN DAMPENED BY FACT THAT MOST GAS THUS FAR EXTRACTED HAS HIGH WATER CONTENT, MAKING IT VIRTUALLY UNUSABLE. YAKUTSK POWER STATION, FOR EXAMPLE, HAD TO CONVERT FROM GAS TO OIL BECAUSE OF WATER PROBLEM (ALTHOUGH IT HAS RECENTLY AGAIN SWITCHED TO GAS WITH COMPLETION OF PIPELINE FROM SREDNE- VILYUYSKIY FIELDS TO YAKUTSK). ALL YAKUTIA GAS PIPELINES ARE ABOVE GROUND, AS WILL BE THE PROPOSED YAKUTSK- NAKHODKA LINE. DUBS

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